



# Indiana Department of Education

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Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

**TO:** Superintendents and Principals

**FROM:** Catherine Danyluk, State Attendance Officer

**DATE:** June 27, 2023

**RE:** Attendance Guidelines

Pursuant to IC 20-33-2-3.2, “attend’ means to be physically present: (1) in a school; or (2) at another location where the school’s educational program in which a person is enrolled is being conducted; during regular school hours on a day in which the educational program in which the person is enrolled is being offered.”

School districts locally define “excused” and “unexcused” absences. This memorandum is guidance to assist schools in defining and reporting absences. Although school corporations are not required to count excused and unexcused absences in the same way, below are some recommended policies for excused and unexcused absences.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Habitual Absence**

Under IC 20-33-2-25, the “Superintendent or an attendance officer having jurisdiction **shall** report a child who is habitually absent from school in violation of this chapter to an intake officer of the juvenile court **or the department of child services**. The intake officer or the department of child services shall proceed in accord with IC 31-30- through IC 31-40.

Under IC 20-33-2-14, the “governing body of each school corporation shall have a policy outlining the conditions for excused and unexcused absences. The policy must include the grounds for excused absences required by Sections 15 through 17.5 of this chapter or another law. Any absence that results in a person not attending at least one hundred eighty (180) days in a school year must be in accordance with the governing body’s policy to qualify as an excused absence.”

IC 18-2-.6.5 defines habitual truancy to include students absent ten (10) days or more from school within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request filed with the school. Guidance from the Indiana Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as students absent from school for ten percent (10 percent) or more of a school year for any reason.



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## Excused Absences

Excused absences are defined as absences that the school corporation regards as legitimate reasons for being out of school, as included in the school policy. These could include:

- Illness verified by note from parent/guardian
- Illness verified by note from Physician
- Family funeral
- Maternity
- Military Connected Families (e.g. absences related to deployment and return)

## Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence not covered under the definition of excused or exempt.

## Exempt

Under certain circumstances, the law requires the school to authorize the absence and excuse of a student: serving as a page or honoree of the General Assembly (IC 20-33-2-14 ); serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the day of a municipal, primary or general election (IC 20-33-2-15); when subpoenaed to testify in court (IC 20-33-2-16); serving with the National Guard for no more than 10 days (IC 20-33-2-17); or serving with the Civil Air Patrol for up to 5 days (IC 20-33-2-17.2), the student is approved for an educationally related non-classroom activity (I.C. 20-33-2-17.5); the student or a member of the student's household exhibits or participates in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes (IC 20-33-2-17.7). In each of these circumstances, the student is excused from school and is not to be recorded as absent, and is not to be penalized in any way by the school. To review this statute in entirety, refer to the [Compulsory School Attendance Law](#).

For additional information, contact Catherine Danyluk, State Attendance Officer at [cdanyluk@doe.in.gov](mailto:cdanyluk@doe.in.gov) or 317/232-9150.